



**COUNTRY PROGRAMME LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (COMDEKS)**

COUNTRY: INDIA

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COUNTRY: INDIA

Summary

India is among the most diverse nations of the world from a cultural, natural endowment, and socio-economic standpoint. It enjoys a long history that makes it a unique country and one where culture and tradition is embedded in everyday living. Given the current economic boom, while urban India chooses to move on through evolved contemporary thinking, the lives of rural community members are still entirely dependent on nature, and as such they respect it for its role in everyday living and believe in its sustainability. Mountain regions in particular are affected by nature's vulnerability and this fact, along with increased dependence on nature and forests for daily needs results in communities also being deeply religious leading to daily life being governed by inherited traditions and beliefs.

This is what makes COMDEKS¹, built on the Satoyama Initiative framework, very relevant at a philosophical and practicable level for enhancing sustainable practices that follow a landscape approach. More importantly it is an initiative that conceptually will not seem imposed and can be practiced at ease by mountain communities within the Indian sub-continent, since there is congruity of thought. It is also for this reason that Uttarakhand suits as a site to house the pilots on such a landscape approach, given the region's respect for such a philosophy and high level of dependability on nature, yet the vulnerability it faces on account of man induced natural phenomenon. The region also suffers on account of a lack of deeper understanding to its problems since policy makers focus limitedly in understanding the constraints and realities of mountain regions. As such COMDEKS comes in as a breath of fresh air to infuse needed strategic focus to a much needed neglected subject.

Communities residing within the mountain system in India earn their living through a multiplicity of livelihood pursuit. As such the integration needed between forestry, agriculture, and animal husbandry, among others is an ongoing phenomenon and one for which there is appreciation by all stakeholders. However, forces of the market as well as constraints such as animal menace, fragmentation of land holdings, and outward migration are all testing traditional systems and bringing sustainable practices under threat. Of late, communities within Uttarakhand state living in the area chosen for COMDEKS implementation in India, have started to develop a better understanding of markets and needed adaptive strategies to adjust to aspects of climate change and this is a welcome development. This has resulted in avenues opening up in tourism, dairying, agriculture, value addition to the Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), among others, and each such initiative connects to traditional knowledge and its surrounding wisdom, though

¹ Funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project (COMDEKS) is a unique global project implemented by UNDP, and delivered through the Small Grants Programme as the flagship of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative. India is one of countries taking part in this global pilot, together with Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Malawi, Nepal, Slovakia, and Turkey. The main objective of the Project is to develop sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities with local communities in socio-ecological production landscapes to maintain, rebuild, and revitalize landscapes.



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seeking contemporary scientific and societal validation. However, gaps are evident at the policy level compounded by weak ongoing support from the state system, as also poor infrastructure that poses challenges to mainstreaming.

However, the belief and willingness of communities residing in such landscapes holds hope to pursue a path of sustainable landscape based living, and one that will be appreciated by the world for its contextual relevance. It is thus important to address the needs of such communities who largely also hold a larger responsibility of being custodians of nature and forests for a nation keen to develop industrially. COMDEKS and Satoyama Initiative can thus contribute to and learn from this core need in a large measure, with the emerging learning being relevant for scaling up the program geographically in other parts of the world.

The Chosen Landscape

Overall 3 landscapes within the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand have been covered for the baseline study forming part of the larger Himalayan Eco-system.

The first landscape, Rasulpur is located in the foothills of the Himalayas but is impacted on account of forest dwellers driven out of the designated Rajaji National Park without any compensatory rights. Being cattle grazers the pressure to feed needs of households is forcing them into pursuing activities that are wreaking havoc in the local ecosystem within and adjoining Rajaji National Park, and as such needs to be addressed through more focused landscape-based diverse livelihoods actions.

The second landscape being addressed is Shankarpur, also set in the foothills of the Himalayas where much damage is being caused to existing farmlands through heightened ravine activity due to flash floods from rivers originating in the hills. This has eroded land, widened river banks and is now threatening the pursuit of agriculture.

The third landscape has varying locations that forms part of the mid-high Himalayan system though with smaller variances of altitude in the local context. This region has an important role to play in meeting overall ecological endowment needs and as such has too many expectations from it, yet is moving to a state of extreme fragility.

Given these factors, varying activities endemic to the region were probed for pursuit such as tourism, traditional foods and systems, forest livelihoods and woodlots, medicinal plants, dairying, and handicrafts; as well as value-added opportunities in dairying, herbs, and traditional foods.

Though people still prevalently practice agriculture, it functions as a subsistence activity that needs to improve in order to become a sustainable occupation giving commensurate returns. Agriculture directly deals with food and nutritional security of the region but has become unproductive due to factors such as migration, marginal and fragmented land holding, weather changes, and market forces; and has thus stopped being meaningful. Without an added value to the existing agriculture system the community is moving towards migration and alternative income source that can have an impact on the quality of land, which is the main component of any landscape. On another count, given the rate of migration, women have become the backbone of agriculture that is primarily pursued as a traditional practice putting further load on them.

Decent level of literacy has helped available workforce to earn their livelihood from privately owned small shops or working in factories in larger cities beyond their region. This is reflected



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through most homes in villages having a family member working in the public sector or defence establishment. Remittances constitute a major inward cash flow component into the family kitty.

Agriculture today is a major activity but not economically strong to create dependence or sustain as a reliable source of income. Therefore the focus will be to encourage local youth who are socially committed, and have a desire to contribute to raising eco-sensitivity and promoting cultural practices to gain skills and knowledge for reinforced livelihoods and enterprises relevant to needs of the region.

Approach and Expected Outcome

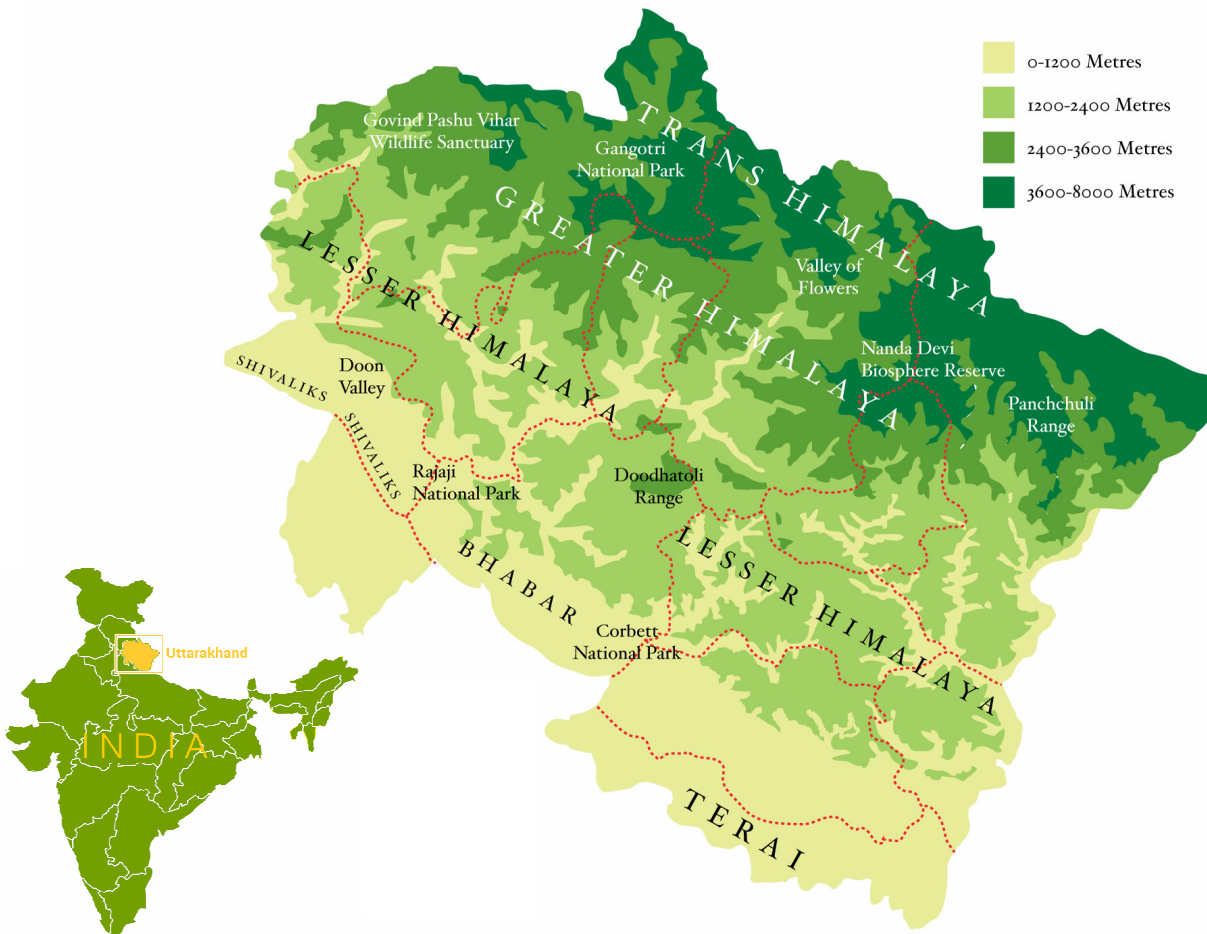
The overall approach will be based on the main perspectives of Satoyama Initiative approach, that focus on ensuring that communities live in harmony with nature with a clear emphasis on resource use within the carrying capacity and resilience of the environment, cyclic use of natural resources, recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures, natural resource management by various participating and cooperating entities, and contributions to local socio-economies.

Some of the outcomes expected to emerge are:

1. Enhanced provision of ecosystem services within the target landscapes through conservation activities and sustainable use of natural resources.
2. Improved agricultural productivity in the target landscape by promoting sound and sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in increased food security and income generation.
3. Alternative livelihoods options promoted within the landscape to enable access to markets and local financial institutions.
4. Institutional systems strengthened at the landscape level by promoting sharing of knowledge and information on effective use of resources and landscape related issues, and a more participatory decision making in the target landscapes.
5. A new learning having emerged and shared as a winning example of a doable approach for others to emulate.

Priority Area

COMDEKS in India is proposed to be implemented in the mountain state of Uttarakhand that offers the perfect setting to roll out the Satoyama philosophy through the COMDEKS programme. Nestled in the Himalayas, Uttarakhand is a location where the role of nature and dependencies on it are more pronounced, and where GEF UNDP SGP has already many ongoing projects.



Physiographic map of Uttarakhand with location indicated within India

Source: <http://uttarakhand.org/?portfolio=relief-map>

The north Indian state of Uttarakhand was formed on November 9, 2000 as India's 27th state coming into existence at the culmination of a long-standing struggle for separate statehood. The state comprises 13 districts distributed over two administrative divisions, Garhwal and Kumaon with the state's capital located at Dehradun in Garhwal. It extends between 77° 34' and 81° 02' E longitude and between 28° 43' to 31° 27' N latitude and has international boundaries in north and west with Tibet and Nepal respectively. To the west and northwest is the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, while the Uttar Pradesh state forming part of Gangetic plains are to the South.

Uttarakhand is spread over 53,483 sq. km. of land, of which 46,035 sq. km. is classified as hill region and only 7,448 sq. km as plains. Of the total, 34,651 sq. km is under forest cover. The 2011 census reported a population of 10.12 million, with a near equal gender divide and nearly

70% of the population residing in rural areas. The entire state forms part of the Central Himalayas starting from the foothills in the South and extending to the snow clad mountains in the north. Uttarakhand is interspersed with rivers, deep valleys, glaciers, and high peaks and presents a very pristine, pure and picturesque landscape. Given the traditional culture and beliefs that are still trusted and respected, it is no wonder that it is also considered to be the abode of Gods and Goddesses with many temples and shrines dotting the landscape.

Topography

The Himalayan chain that Uttarakhand forms part of originated from the continent to continent collision of the Eurasian and Indian plates. The Himalayas (meaning the abode of snow) was formed as a result of northward drift of the Indian plate after its split from the Gondwana – land; consumption of intervening oceanic crust of the Neotethys; and then its collision with the Tibetan plate during the Eocene period. The continued collision process caused the crustal shortening on the northern margin of India as well as the southern margin of Tibet.



A vulnerable section encountered during travel through Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand's altitude shows a wide variation from about 350m in the southern plains to about 7,800 m on the mountain peaks and passes in the northern part towards the international border with Tibet. The Himalayan axis, running from South East to North West is home to major peaks such as Nanda Devi (7816 m), Kamet Mana (7756 m), Chaukhamba (7138 m), Trisul (7120 m), and Dronagiri (7066 m).

Climate

The state has average rainfall of 1,606 mm. with the weather and climate of Uttarakhand mainly governed by the summer and winter monsoon systems of Asia. The winter rain is brought in by the 'western disturbance' and the summer rain by summer monsoon winds. There is wide variation in the rainfall distribution in the region with areas towards the north that fall within the rain shadow having very little rainfall. Rainfall is also very low in the interior regions but during monsoon, the region can be prone to landslides and floods; and at times cloud bursts causing unusually heavy rainfall, leading often to disastrous flash floods. The higher chain of the mountain range gets major part of precipitation as snow fall during December to February.

Each mountain is unique in itself with respect to amount of precipitation, temperature and climate. Towards higher reaches, the air is thin and radiation is intense as ultraviolet radiation is not filtered by the thin air. The temperature varies greatly from place to place with maximum temperature in 2010 reaching up to 41.2°C during summer (May-June) in Dehradun, and minimum falling to -2.3°C during winter (Jan-Feb.) in Mukteshwar and surrounding regions. Summers are extremely hot in the valleys and pool frosts are common during winter. Generally, the winters are severe and the summers pleasant. Broadly, four seasons can be recognized; namely winter from November to March, summer from April to mid-June, monsoon from July to mid-September, and autumn from mid-September to October/November.

Drainage

Himalayas are the youngest; tectonically active and structurally a very complicated mountain range, from where a number of perennial rivers originate that provide sustenance to vast masses of people in the valleys and rich alluvial plains of the country. A number of important rivers like Ganges, Yamuna, Kali (Sarda), Dhaulī, Gori, Ramganga (Eastern), Alaknanda, Bhagirathi and Tons etc. arise from its axis. The major rivers have their catchment separated by secondary mountain ranges arising from the main Himalayan axis and flow mainly North-East to South-West. Tributaries of the main rivers have their catchments separated by secondary mountain ranges arising from main rivers with their source in these secondary ranges.

The forest cover on these hill ranges is instrumental in regulating the extent of precipitation in the region and also the flow of water in its streams. This mountain system has a dominant influence on the water regime, temperature, humidity and ecological balance of northern India. Snow or rain on its slopes feeds a number of perennial streams and rivers that flow down to plains below. With limited options exercised at the local levels as a priority in water harvesting most of the water is lost through perennial river flows.

Land Use Pattern

Most of the area is under forests and wastelands thus leaving behind only a small amount of land (about 12 percent) for cultivation. As of 2009-10 the net sown area was 741,099 ha. constituting 13.8% of the total land area of the state, much of it taken up by forests. In terms of land holding; 71.4% was held by marginal farmers (<1 ha.), 17.7% was held by small farmers (1-2 ha.), 10.8% was classified medium (2-10 ha.), and only 0.1% had a holding of over 10 ha.

Unscientific land use coupled with faulty management practices has disturbed the natural balance leading to vicious circle of over exploitation excessive erosion lowered productivity and is compelling the local people to migrate to other areas of plains. This cycle of all round deterioration and desertification may become irreversible if not checked in time. Once the topsoil is washed away and soil fertility is lost, neither agricultural crops nor animal husbandry nor horticulture etc. will be able to sustain the people of the area. *This along with the issue of small and marginal holdings prevents scale of economies being reached also impacting input cost per unit of output.* Agriculture is thus a weak proposition standalone from a profitable occupation standpoint.

Soils

The soil show variation in its characteristics due to aspects of geology and parent rocks, and wide variation in topography with another hill range called Shivaliks lying south of Himalayas. The soil cover in the hills is very thin; comprising red loam, brown forest soil, podsol and meadow soil. Soil erosion has set in over areas already affecting the moisture regime of the

region by way of flash floods during rains followed by excessive drought and shortage of drinking water during dry summer months. This causes untold misery to the people inhabiting the hills and also those in plains below. Rapid surface runoff has washed the rich top soils and has thus rendered vast stretches of land infertile, unproductive and uneconomic for cultivation. Gully formation torrents and land slides erosion are not only damaging productive land but also destroying habitations and disrupting the communication and transport system as well as perennial sources of supply. Maize is also grown on the sloppy land leading to erosion at scales.

Crops

Generally agriculture practices vary depending farmers being part of rainfed or irrigated areas. Cereals are emphasized in irrigated agriculture and two crops can be taken in an agriculture year. However in the rain fed system; millets, maize, pulses, and tuber crops are grown along with cereals and oilseeds. Mono-cropping is a common practice in irrigated areas and contrary to this mixed cropping is common in rainfed areas. Mixed cropping, practiced in the hilly region helps in maintaining crop diversity and reduces the risk of environmental uncertainty.

The cultivation pattern in Uttarakhand reflects a declining trend in acreage of conventional crops like barley and at the same time increase in non conventional crops like soybean and vegetable crops. Farmers are gradually shifting from cultivation of low value crops to high value crops. The decline in the area under traditional crop has been relatively higher in the *Kharif* (monsoon) season as compared to *Rabi* (winter) season. During the kharif season the farmers are putting a sizable land area towards production of off-season vegetables. The land under production of traditional *Kharif* crop has declined at 10 percent as against 8 percent for *Rabi* crop. Despite the small holdings, most farmers who are relatively well connected to the market and have adequate irrigation facility have opted for a shift in production from low value food grains to high value commercial crops particularly vegetable and pulses.

Farming situation	Soil	Principal crops
Irrigated lower hills (600-1200m.)	Alluvial sandy soil	Rice, wheat, onion, chillies, peas, potato, radish, cauliflower
Rainfed lower hills (600-1200 m.)	Residual sandy loam	Finger millet, maize, rice, wheat
Mid hills south aspect (1200-1700 m.)	Sandy loam	Rice, finger millet, wheat, potato, tomato
Mid hills north aspect (1200-1700 m.)	Brown forest soil	Rice, finger millet, maize, wheat, potato, tomato, peas, cole crops
High hills (1700-2500 m.)	Red to dark	Amaranth, finger millet, french bean, cole crops, potato, peas
Very high hills (2500-3500 m.)	Red to dark Black clay	Amaranth, buckwheat, peas, loam cole crops, potato

Source: Uttarakhand Statehood, M.C. Sati & S.P. Sati

Other than food grains and fruits, the hilly region also provides valuable timber, fuel wood, fodder, fiber, herbs, and other varied NTFPs for subsistence of the population.

People: Life in the mountain region of Uttarakhand is tough, strained further by challenging dynamics that are created by nature and man. Landholdings are small and spread over a large area making pursuit of common forms of livelihoods such as dairying and farming more difficult. This is one of the primary reasons for migration of male members of the household in order to eke a living for their family. This forces the burden of managing the landscape and family on the women of the house who are already overburdened given their need to pay



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attention to daily routine needs of cooking, children, and other domestic chores. Beyond this they are expected to source fodder for cattle, fuel wood for cooking, and water for which she has to travel a long distance and carry a big burden on her nimble shoulders since such material is no longer available close to the village. Limited access to information, limited skills and exposure, non availability of timely access to credit from banks further worsens the debt burden of the locals. Communities are under constant pressures for sustainable lives and livelihoods.

As such, development interventions being planned needs to be thought through with much care, and need to include actions for the reduction of drudgery faced by women in the hills, since they are the most dependent workforce available on regular basis currently, and success of the initiative will largely depend on their ability to participate whole heartedly. Supporting locally appropriate actions will lead to increase in local capacity.

The GEF UNDP SGP projects promoted in the past in Uttarakhand have acknowledged these needs and fostered such needed efforts that has in a big way attributed to their success. These initiatives have been taken up through informal, kinship, common trade, and locally area-based women self -help groups (SHGs) led units that have been up scaled by *establishing federations, producer companies/societies*. This have also helped build on the women's strong underlying conviction to nurture and protect the environment, while connecting and competing within the market system. The projects funded have helped fuel the *entrepreneurship spirit* lying latent in the population through a series of awareness, capacity building activities including needed skills to cope with a competitive market, and market supported efforts. The program has been able to respect learners' ideas, participation, (in decisions, roles-responsibilities and small financial contributions) and knowledge.

SGP has helped establish successful business models for forest and nature-based value-added products such as jams, squashes, pickles, spices, woolen knits, and embroidery. In this process, communities have been fully involved at all levels in project design and implementation, especially in regard to sustainable raw material sourcing, production, and linkage to markets. Establishment of biogas units has helped reduce women's drudgery in sourcing fuelwood as well as provide essential fertilizers for agriculture. These are among some of the initiatives that include smokeless cook stoves, household nurseries, local small water harvesting structures and other related simple, low cost, easy-to-understand-and-implement technologies that have directly fed into the goals of OP5 in relation to sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation and energy efficiency and energy conservation. The COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy for India is aligned with the 5th Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in India project's primary objective which is to ensure a mosaic of land uses and community practices across the rural landscape that provide sustainable livelihoods while generating global benefits for BD, CC and LD. In particular, COMDEKS landscape strategy is in line with activities proposed under the first component; mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and sectors. Additionally, under COMDEKS the landscape approach will work in synergy with energy conservation/efficiency activities. The supported communities will gain exposure to low cost renewable technologies for energy efficiency and enhance their capacity to access credit. This will reduce their dependence on firewood, promote dedicated woodlots, and conservation of the biodiversity. Simple, low cost renewable technologies for drying, and energy efficiency will be introduced.

In line with the overall GEF SGP OP5 mandate, the COMDEKS project in India seeks to bring about community development, learning, and knowledge sharing by making available small



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grants to community organizations to help them maintain and manage more resilient socio-ecological production landscapes. It is expected that COMDEKS grants at the landscape level will be matched as cofinancing by an equal amount in regular funding from the Upgraded SGP Country Programme. The OP5 India Programme will fund NGOs/CBOs in the same geographic location but for differing relevant activities in support of the India COMDEKS strategy.

Situation Analysis

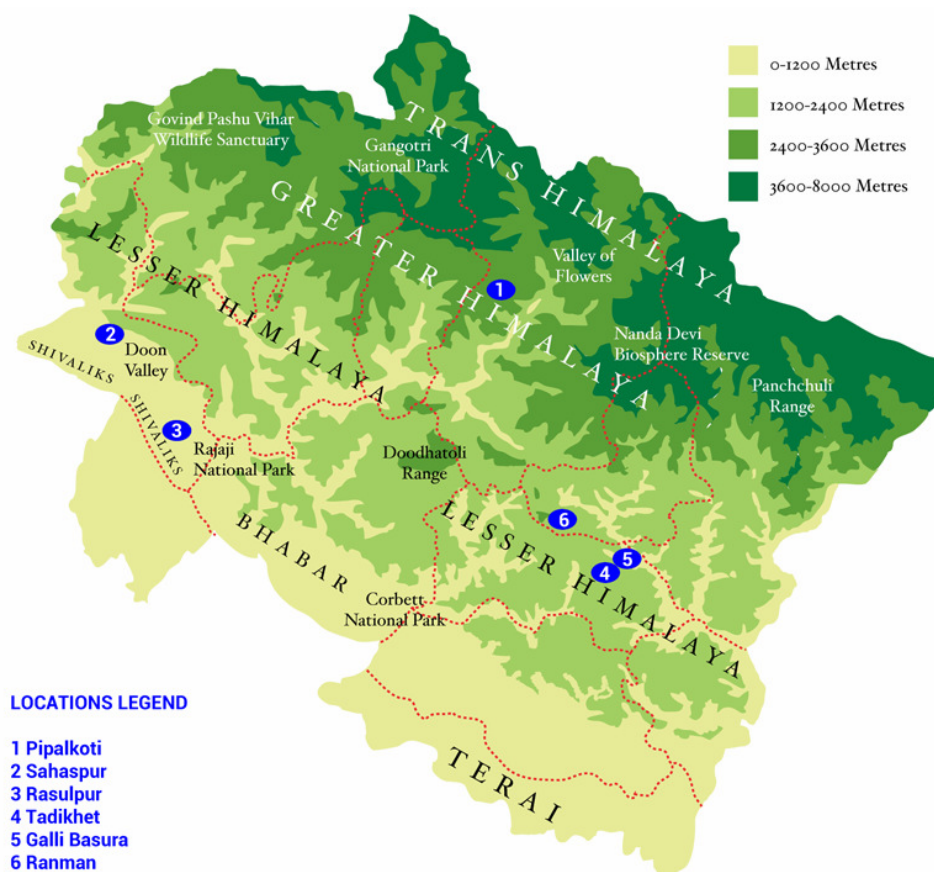
As is to be expected, the mountain livelihood system that once existed within a well balanced landscape has come under pressure with passage of time and increasing population density. As if hardships of daily living are not enough given the harsh realities of topography and nature, detrimental changes are putting increased pressure on communities living in such environments, thus negatively impacting the environment resulting from increasing needs and changed practices pursued by communities. The changing scenario is not only disrupting livelihoods but has also resulted in bringing increased pressure on natural resources, further impacting family life and resulting in increased outward migration. Further, lack of infrastructures and weak understanding of policy/decision makers in such landscapes have further aggravated the lot of mountain communities who live a life of greater hardship compared to their counterparts in the plains.

While reasons for this degradation over time can be attributed to very many factors, with many discussed in the earlier section, the following constitute major reasons that have created this changed scenario over the years:

1. Restriction on the forest based livelihood options available traditionally to community
2. Access to technology and timely credit facilities to the communities so as to have better value-added to the forest and nature based products
3. Man animal conflicts due to depleting forest resources and ingress of the wildlife and impacting pursuit of agriculture
4. Falling respect for biodiversity in the face of low knowledge of its importance, and pressing survival needs impacting its degradation and hence its relevance
5. Climate change and shifting weather patterns, increased pressures from high cost agriculture practices to the more organic ways of productions systems based on the local sustainable practices.
6. Pressure from increased demands and population for immediate incomes is leading to the replacement of diverse horticulture based systems to more mono cropping landscape systems of Paddy-Wheat crops.
7. Poor relevance of centrally devised policy initiatives for integrated rural development, and related livelihood support that have weak relevance to mountain scenarios.
8. Poor infrastructure and connectivity resulting in higher cost of inputs, also adding to output cost on account of lack of efficient linkage to markets.
9. Outward migration driven from a need to earn a decent living standard.

To understand ground realities that could contribute to building the foundation for the future COMDEKS effort, a baseline exercise was conducted as a first step. It comprised following processes taken up systematically commencing with a stakeholder consultation. Feedback gathered at the stakeholder consultation was later followed up with a day session with participating representatives of the landscapes chosen for baseline survey. The following steps followed formed part of efforts in the field:

- A one day initial briefing session and sitting with the existing GEF SGP partners and NGO partners to outline the features of the COMDEKS program and understand past efforts and typicality of the landscape they had worked in. This resulted in filling up of a Data Sheet form in collaboration with the partner.
- Sharing of a background note with GEF SGP and other NGO partners outlining COMDEKS objectives and processes to be adopted (and needs for) the baseline study
- Community meeting at the 7/8 different field locations in the state, each apart at least 50-70 km to undertake with community members the map making exercise that helped them prepare and validate the maps of participating villages.
- Administration and recording of 20 key questions comprising a set of resilience indicators in socio-ecological production landscapes, developed by IPSI members Bioversity International and UNU-IAS, and piloted by the COMDEKS Project as part of a baseline study through a system of cards and board based interactions with partners at every location.
- Plotting of all responses on Excel sheet provided by COMDEKS program office.



LOCATIONS LEGEND

- 1 Pipalkoti
- 2 Sahaspur
- 3 Rasulpur
- 4 Tadikhet
- 5 Galli Basura
- 6 Ranman

COMDEKS Baseline Study Locations

(markings are approximate, refer below for co-ordinates)

Relief Map Courtesy: <http://uttarakhand.org/?portfolio=relief-map>

The six locations identified (see map above) for COMDEKS baseline study were drawn up with GEF UNDP SGP team in a consultative manner based on impacting factors suggested below:

- Biodiversity and ethnic value traits prevalent in region and now coming under pressure
- State of distress and declining quality of life, unreached areas

- Existing partners working and trust worthy relations existing in the areas
- Base of local traditional knowledge and practices
- Need to bring and converge interventions to the local governance systems
- Opportunity to enhance sustainable management practices on landscape bases as the mandate of COMDEKS

The table below indicates the co-ordinates of the chosen six locations:

Location	Co-ordinates/Altitude (mtrs)	Location	Co-ordinates/Altitude (mtrs)
Pipalkoti	N 30°43'53.6" E 79°42'78.7"/ 2415	Tadikhet	N 29°37'20.6" E 79°25' 23.5"/ 1860
Shankarpur	N 30°39'84" E 77°84'15"/ 458	Galli Basura	N 29°41'32.6" E 79° 24' 38.5"/ 1350
Rasulpur	N 30°01'18.7" E 77°58'23.6"/ 325	Ranman	N 29°44'68.3" E 79°37'31.0"/ 1409

Brief Summary of Landscape

Presented below is a brief summary of the six landscapes covered under the baseline study:

While the background of the six landscapes has been covered on page 3 under the heading “The Chosen Landscape” it needs to be highlighted that Rasulpur and Shankarpur each share a different landscape though resting in the foothills of the Himalayas, but the other 4 locations share almost similar features of the Himalayan mountain region. Tadikhet, Ranikhet and Ranman can be approached on the same route and of these 3 locations, Ranikhet and Tadikhet share the same market. Activities supported in each location would need to be different but their inter-linkage will benefit the overall landscape broadly. Landscape based activities supported by COMDEKS will help to link community efforts with markets helping the local community through a sustainable livelihoods approach.

Rasulpur: Situated on the fringe of the Rajaji National Park, Haridwar; the area is home to the Tongias who though had been driven out of the national park, have not been rehabilitated in the fringe areas they reside in. SGP partner Friends of Doon Society has been active with the cause of the community who are essentially herders who have been living a forest based existence and are sensitive to the needs of such a landscape.

Three villages Rasulpur, Rasulpur-Tongia and Daluwala Kalan; proposed to be covered under the intervention have a total of 490 households housing a population of 2,171. Activities pursued are largely farming, animal husbandry and other traditional skill based pursuits such as carpentry, tailoring, blacksmith, etc. Total cultivable land available is 3,859 ha, that currently



The setting of Rasulpur village on the fringe of Rajaji National Park

grows cereals, pulses, sugarcane, and oil seeds though animal menace is discouraging its continued pursuit. Other than farming, poultry has been also introduced by Friends of Doon Society, Dehradun (FODS), a NGO working in the region, and is meeting with success. Most of the population falls under the below poverty line (BPL) category and suffers from lack of availability of basic health and education facilities. Community

members are largely dependent on forest produce that with passage of time has become illegal to pursue, though the community is forced to turn to it to meet their needs, even though as an illegal activity. There is thus a need to realign their livelihoods to a more meaningful pursuit to fulfill their needs as also give the ecosystem a chance to maintain the needed balance.

In terms of livelihoods activities in the target locations currently being visualized are afforestation, revival of existing and new water bodies, revival of traditional foods agriculture systems, medicinal plants, soil and water conservation actions, pasture development, and value-added livelihood activities such as tourism, dairying, handicrafts & conservation, use and processing of local fruits, food items and medicinal plants for better value, all also promoting conservation of sacred natural sites, including heightening of the cultural, spiritual and socio-economic values in the local societal system.

Shankarpur: Shankarpur falls part of the Sahaspur region that is close to Dehradun, and the local NGO Society of People for Development has been active in the field of biodiversity management engaging themselves with a community primarily involved in agriculture. The 5 villages chosen for the landscape-wide baseline study have a population of 13,415 living in 2,422 households; and forms part of an overall area where the NGO Society of People for Development (SPD) has been active for around a decade. Considering the proximity to the state capital Dehradun, the region's community members are involved with pulses and vegetable

farming, growing improved varieties of cereal, pulses, oil seeds, potato, pea, ginger etc. While forest land of 1,376 ha exists in the area, community members have little stake in preserving the ecosystem that can be seen to be having an impact on the area's farming practice. Industrialization in nearby Selaqui area is putting pressure on land and humans, who are abandoning agriculture in favour of a wage earning factory job. Due to interference with the natural system and lack of any sustained effort, a large portion of usable land is eroding on account of flash floods occurring in the Swarna river flowing through the area. To reclaim lost land and protect it from further degradation, it is imperative that the community be sensitized to take care of their and the influencing eco-system to improve the quality of farm land, forest and other natural endowments to secure land based livelihoods for the future.



A view of the Swarna river affected landscape in Shankarpur

Ranman: The Gram Panchayats² (GPs) of Kotuli, Bajel, Panya and Sunari sit within the Kausani Valley on the road going from Almora to Kausani. The valley is typical as dot the Himlayan landscape but the settings of the villages within, the scenic endowment, and the accessibility to locale on an individual/combined basis makes for development of trekking options that can be mixed with exposing tourists to a slice of clean and healthy village life. It is in this setting that Mahila Haat, an NGO of more than two decade standing has been working to promote eco-tourism in the area for over a decade to help the rural community better their living standard, given the lack of too many other options. The baseline study was done for an area covering the above 4 GPs having 571 households and population of 3,809. While farming was pursued on small parcels of land, communities were dependent on forests for fuel and fodder. The youth are migrating to urban areas but with the introduction of tourism on an organized scale there may be hope for the youth to



A view of the picturesque Ranman Valley

stay back to eke a living, yet also lend a hand to support their family in domestic responsibilities. Though the region is rich in its natural endowment natural calamities like forest fires, soil erosion, and land degradation are adversely affecting lives of local people. Mahila Haat's approach to tourism has helped build awareness for the need to maintain natural endowment as well as structures such as *Naulas*³ including its catchment area, much needed to maintain a steady stream of water for village members during summers.

Pipalkoti: Pipalkoti is situated on the route to Badrinath, a holy religious location for Hindus, is part of the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. By virtue of this the route sees very many religion based tourists passing through it⁴. It is here that the NGO AAGAAS Federation has been working in 30 villages on livelihood based activities directed at tapping the tourist potential. Among their pursuits, handicrafts, tourism, and food processing have earned good returns for communities involved. The baseline activity conducted at Pipalkoti covered 3 villages having a total population of 2,047 spread over 434 households. It emerged that local communities are sensitive to the cause of nature and environment considering



Products manufactured by crafts persons in Chamoli

² An administrative unit covering a village are represented through a locally elected self-government

³ A historical fabricated structure forming a point of collection for the flowing spring water.

⁴ Tourist inflow on the temple route stands in excess of 1.5 mn. annually.

their livelihoods were dependent on it. In the past too an afforestation programme under MNREGA⁵ with joint efforts of women of Aagaas federation and gram panchayats had found success. The average land holding of farmers is very small and varies between 0.5 to 1 acre per household, but in 6-7 fragmented locations. Dairying is a preferred option in this hill commune, and voluntary groups of women and youth actively take part in efforts to improve the village and adjoining areas. Though the area has abundant natural endowment, yet frequent landslides create problems for local people. Not only does such an event adversely impact their life at household level, but that of livelihoods too on account of broken connectivity. Falling on the main route to the famous Hindu temple, Badrinath there is abundant tourist inflow for 3-4 months in a year that creates a huge demand for natural produce, and beyond that there is a huge potential for adventure and nature tourism. Thus efforts in such value added products or services as can cater to tourist needs have good potential.

Tadikhet: Located close to Ranikhet that has a large defence establishment and is a popular tourist destination, Tadikhet is home to community members keen to better their lot given the potential of Ranikhet being a market close by (24 kms). Dairying is a preferred option practiced by women and it assumes a traditional significance within her overall responsibility framework. Milk being associated with nutrition in a region where it is difficult to achieve a balanced diet makes it another reason why women pursue the act of dairying with interest. Chatrasal Sewa Sansthan (CSS) has been working for livelihood improvement in Tadikhet and have managed to improve prospects of dairying for around 400 members attached to the dairying groups from a total of 30 villages. Their future plan is to upscale coverage as well as improve prospects of the sector through a more involved approach addressing needs of animal health, breeding, fodder and feeding, and improved market linkage. The baseline study covered community members from 17 villages and there was a feeling of positive energy that community members wished to back their initiative rather than that of the government supported cooperative dairy who were not giving them fair returns for their produce. Such is the motivation that milk cans are carried as far as 5 kms distance to the road head as part of a regular



supply chain. The region has abundant availability of seasonal fodder grass (also stored after drying for rest of the year), on-farm trees such as Bhimal (*Grewia optiva*), Khadik (*Celtis australis*), and forest trees such as Quercus and Queeral. However there is a need to manage fodder so that milk productivity can be improved in quantity and quality terms, resulting in better cash flow for families involved. Excess of milk can be processed for milk by-products and on-site processing through



A lady removes chaff from finger millet by pounding it in a traditional manner (left), while a passenger jeep doubles up as a milk collection vehicle (top)

⁵ A central government supported scheme that started out as a food for work program and has now become the leading employment generating initiative of the government promising 100 days of work to those below the poverty line.



Baseline session in progress at Galli Basura

appropriate technical training will help save on labour as well as time consumed in walking long distances from its source to the milk collection point. Dairying can make a huge impact in the hill region given the abundance of natural vegetation, however traditional and modern day practices need to come together to make the effort more reliable and remunerative.

Galli Basura: Sitting in a picturesque valley 15 kms ahead of Ranikhet, Galli Basura is keen to address its needs of agriculture that has come under emerging threats of animal menace, climate change, and lack of ability to pursue a changed approach. Cultivation and marketing of traditional crops such as *Mandwa* (Finger millet), *Jhangora* (Barnyard millet), *Bhatt* (*Glycine max*), *Gahath* (*Macrotyloma uniflorum*), Amaranth; can help nurture traditional food habits while supporting needs of nutrition as well as livelihoods. Inability to pursue such an approach can lead to dependence on external supplies to the detriment of a community

that has the ability to address its needs through a renewed approach. Lok Chetna Manch (LCM) has been actively working around Ranikhet with a focus on agriculture and medicinal plants. In particular they have earned a name for helping clean a famous tourist spot, the Nainital Lake, through a series of front-end and back-end efforts. The baseline study represented voices of 334 households covering 5 villages of the chosen area. While the area is blessed with good topography and natural endowment, the missing link created by poor awareness and market linkage deters farmers to grow traditional crops that have a good potential here. Among other things, the shift from traditional crops to intensive vegetable cultivation abandons the concept of crop rotation and deteriorates natural biodiversity, with negative impacts on soil health⁶. An initiative that builds on agro-ecological principles and appropriate cultivation practices, while at the same time meeting farmers needs and encouraging links to markets, can help increase awareness of the benefits of traditional, nutritional foods not only among community members but also other consumers around the globe. Future efforts should be focused on sharing best farming practices, and making information available in local and national languages that benefits mountain farmers.

Landscape Strategy

The COMDEKS program to be piloted through the Country Programme Landscape Strategy and implemented as field initiatives in the mountain state of Uttarakhand will look to bring renewed meaning to the cause of community livelihoods within a sustainable mountain eco-system framework that includes strengthening of community's traditional knowledge and cultural base.

For COMDEKS to intervene in an effective manner it will need to bear in mind the points that have emerged from the baseline study as covered in the earlier section to create an improved impact on mountain community life. As such COMDEKS will support 5/6 different projects with

⁶ Intensive vegetable farming for profit has been known to cause damage to soil on account of the very practice as well as the intensive inputs used to generate higher profit. A drastic shift from agriculture to intensive vegetable cultivation breaks the concept of crop rotation where cereal and pulses are rotated helping maintain soil health. Though vegetable cultivation is good as a diversification option of income for farmers, yet community needs to be sensitised to appropriate management of resources, thus contributing to the important need of a balanced ecosystem.

emphasis on linking with the concerned central and state departments.

It is expected that with the support of COMDEKS, traditional knowledge will be integrated into existing interventions through a newer systemic approach. The following issues will be addressed through COMDEKS projects:

Food and nutrition security: Food and nutrition security in this area is directly associated with agriculture production. The decline in traditional agriculture practices is posing a threat to food and nutritional security. As an example, traditionally grown millets and pulses while highly nutritious are losing importance within cropping systems, as noted at the Ranikhet location, due to lack of access to markets.

Land Improvement: The important aspect of land degradation will be addressed at Shankarpur and Rasulpur locations through improved tree cover in the former and grasslands in the latter region. Along with water conservation, soil conservation will also be addressed.

Dairying: Given the the relevance of integrated farming-livestock systems, dairying will also be promoted to add to household income.

Tourism: At Pipalkoti, tourism constitutes a major source of income for local communities given its proximity to religious tourism sites where more than a million people visit during a period of 4 months, as well as year-round from nature based tourism. Developing an environmentally conscious tourism industry as an ecosystem sensitive activity will help minimize negative impacts to the landscape as well as increase livelihood options for the poor of the region over the longer term.

Proposed Strategy

The following points give a direction to the strategy that will be adopted while initiating the COMDEKS project in the Uttarakhand region of India.

1. Promote respect for biodiversity and ethnic values helping restore the balance between people and nature:

In the past when the population pressure was not as high, land was sufficiently available to cater to one's needs, and forests were open to access on a mutual management basis. This was accompanied by respect for nature and biodiversity, and the benefits of an integrated farming system approach. The importance of these approaches was recognized as an essential aspect of day-to-day living. The abandonment of such traditional practices⁷ has led to the decline not only of biodiversity but also of the knowledge base of traditional sustainable practices resulting in increased pressure on natural resources.



⁷ Abandonment of traditional practices has happened over time on account of result of collective inter-related actions of nature based changes, greed, convenience, insensitivity of the state supported system, relevance, lack of time, etc.

Beekeeping, dairying, and cultivation of traditional food crops, including such traditional practices as the system of *Barahnaja* (see box on following page), should be renewed with the aim of providing food security and meeting nutrition needs of even poorer families. Traditional cropping practices in the region are also found viable to be pursued on small holdings of land.

Traditional Farming Practice in Uttarakhand

"The advanced nature of traditional farming in the region is illustrated by the practice of *barahnaja* (literally, '12 seeds'). This is the name of a sophisticated intercropping system of rainfed hill farming.

Mandua (finger millets), *ramdana/chua* (amaranthus), *rajma* (common kidney beans), *ogal* (buckwheat), *urad* (green gram), *moong* (black gram), *naurangi* (mix of pulses), *gahath* (horsegram), *bhat* (soybean), *lobiya* (French beans) *kheera* (cucumber), *bhang* (cannabis), and other crops, are grown together in a mixture which is finely balanced to optimize productivity and maintenance of soil fertility, and is geared towards meeting diverse household requirements. In such traditional cultivation, farmers had to spend almost nothing on inputs, since seeds, organic fertilizer, and pest control were virtually free. Whenever they realized that conditions were suitable, they would start planting..."

from Jardhari & Kothari 1997

Source: <http://uttarakhand.prayaga.org/agriculture.html>

2. Address decline of agricultural productivity: As stated earlier, pursuit of agriculture that is the mainstay for most families has stopped being profitable⁸ over time. This is due to factors such as, (i) fragmentation of landholdings through division of inheritance across generations, (ii) falling yields from soil and water degradation, especially in light of accelerating climate change, (iii) market competitiveness tending to castigate inefficient performers, due to poor infrastructure and resultant input/output delivery inefficiencies, (iv) the national research and extension system largely focusing on the needs of irrigated farmers on the plains over the needs of poor rainfed hill farmers, (v) threats from wild animals such as wild boar, monkey, elephants, and *Nilgai* (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) – an antelope also known as Blue Bull in some parts of the world (see picture alongside), (vi) breakdown of integrated farming approaches, specifically the decline of dairy production and reduction in bee populations, and (vii) shortage of labor due to out-migration, and increasing dependence on seasonal migrants with added costs.

While there has been a talk over the last decade about diversification, there is little to be seen by way of success through animal husbandry, horticulture, or medicinal herbs; though to be fair, success stories in pockets can be seen but not to the scale that the state's neighbour to the west, Himachal Pradesh has demonstrated. It is also important that policy support for agriculture in hill regions be given importance considering, (i) unique food needs of hill communities where specific crops can only be grown in similar landscapes, (ii) cost of delivering food to remote areas, and (iii) logistical difficulties particularly in the event of a disaster.

It would thus be very important to pursue sustainable agriculture from a livelihood and food security perspective. Given the community's deeper understanding of ecosystems and biodiversity, COMDEKS will do well to reinforce this latent sentiment and rekindle practices to

⁸ While agriculture in general is suffering sustainable agriculture has little chance of being adopted unless it holds a meaning in the short term that translates to profitability. The pursuit to improve yield has wreaked havoc with soil and water resource and also made agriculture a loss bearing activity for the poor. As is known, in India while agriculture is the primary form of rural livelihood it is largely practiced on a subsistence basis and today can't even meet an entire year's need of most families. Yet it is being pursued towards abandonment on account of its cultural importance and lack of alternatives available in the rural landscape, or lack of skill to pursue other options. This also is the primary cause of migration. In the hills remittance from one migrant earning member in the family constitutes the largest income source. As such there is a need to make agriculture meaningful not only from an economic point of view but also as a gainful livelihood occupation.

bring new meaning to traditional thinking, though now with a scientific temper. The health food sector can be targeted for use of niche crops such as millet, buckwheat, amaranths that grow well in the hills, as well as other organic agriculture products.

3. Enhance support to women who are the potent workforce in the hills: A major impact of migration has been the increased workload on women, already burdened with domestic responsibilities directed at ensuring a high quality of life for their family. Life for women in the Uttarakhand hills creates demand on them for needs of fuel, fodder, and water; no longer available at points of close access. Most women have to trudge into the forest to carry head loads (30-35 kgs each) of fodder for their cattle, some even twice a day if they have more cattle. Additionally wood for the domestic hearth and water for drinking most of the time needs to be sourced from a distance. Each of these activities could end up being for a couple of hours. Given their already busy schedules at home, these create further demands on their time and bodies while men have migrated or many times even waste their time in wasteful pursuits. Given this, women stand at the heart of the landscape in terms of their livelihood responsibilities (and hence are more sensitive to the need for conservation); COMDEKS will bear this in mind and target initiatives to meet their needs.



4. Tap niche areas for income generation, enterprise development and potential from market access: Given the economic boom faced by India and the nature of globalization, new potential opportunities related to the land hold promise for a region such as Uttarakhand. These could manifest through activities such as tourism, niche crops, handicrafts, health foods, organic produce, dairying, and floriculture, among others. Each of these hold potential to satiate the appetite of a cash-rich consumer if market needs can be understood, logistics organized, and production made a viable activity through a system of aggregated delivery. Such an approach may also stimulate interest among the youth, exposing them to alternate workspaces, different from the more conventional ones as suggested by their elders during the baseline assessment. As such COMDEKS will address such livelihood pursuits at household levels and establish models that can be adopted in other locations.

5. Creating a strong knowledge capture and sharing system: This effort will be key to positioning the entire program to provide inputs to policy makers and landscape management practitioners. It will improve understanding of landscape dynamics, stakeholder livelihoods and needs, and governance requirements through capturing and sharing experiences and learning).

6. Creating Local Institutions for sustainable practices and convergence: Emphasis will be given to the facilitation of local kinship and area-based people's institutions. Given the needs that have emerged from the baseline study, initiatives implemented will use these six cornerstones as the basis for COMDEKS project development.



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Expected Outcomes

The COMDEKS programme in India seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Enhanced provision of ecosystem services within the target landscapes through conservation activities and sustainable use of natural resources.
 - Indicator 1.1: Number of hectares of degraded ecosystems in the landscape brought under sustainable resource management restored or rehabilitated
 - Indicator 1.2: Number of communities demonstrating sustainable land and forest management practices.
2. Improved agricultural productivity in the target landscape by promoting sound and sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in increased food security and income generation.
 - Indicator 2.1: Number of hectares where more sustainable land use practices are implemented by type.
 - Indicator 2.2: No of farm groups/communities and farmers (disaggregated by gender) participating in adoption of appropriate technologies and systems including crop diversification, agroforestry, irrigated agriculture, conservation farming, low cost renewable technologies for drying, and energy efficiency technologies, mixed farming-livestock systems, etc.
3. Alternative livelihoods options promoted within the landscape to enable access to markets and local financial institutions.
 - Indicator 3.1: Number of alternative income sources created through livelihood diversification (i.e. dairying and ecotourism).
 - Indicator 3.2: Number of participating community members (gender disaggregated) benefitting by project activities.
4. Institutional systems strengthened at the landscape level by promoting sharing of knowledge and information on effective use of resources and landscape related issues, and a more participatory decision making in the target landscapes.
 - Indicator 4.1: Number of community-based institutions created or strengthened who are engaged in integrated landscape management.
 - Indicator 4.2: Number of policy or plans influenced or created at the national and community levels which reflect decisions negotiated in a participatory manner at the landscape level.
 - Indicator 4.3: Number of COMDEKS lessons learned from the project.

Typology of potential community-based projects and criteria for project selection

The previous section has outlined through the strategy presented the kind of initiatives that would bolster needs of sustainable livelihood pursuit in the region. The national system is not too sensitized to the special needs of mountain regions and does not feel it necessary to compensate in a special way for the lack of development but rather keep the region in both conservative and



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protective modes. This however has a great impact on people since their livelihoods come under pressure with not enough support being found to their lone cause.

This in itself can become a huge reason to undertake projects under COMDEKS that promote respect for the environment while at the same time address human needs and livelihoods. The activities planned need to be those that can compete in meeting local requirements effectively. Amongst these could be, (i) those where the unique attributes of the region can be leveraged, such as tourism or niche crops such as health foods, (ii) where the local activity can sustain itself against the logistical burden of carrying goods in for the common needs of the region, eg. dairying and vegetable cultivation, or even those that can build upon the raw material available through value addition activity in which the community can be involved effectively, such as bamboo crafts and food processing, or (iii) lastly those that support needs of conservation based on community led initiatives through field interventions or even those revolving around advocacy, awareness building, or capacity development.

The criteria for selection of CBOs and the NGOs as partners in the program will have the following considerations, other than their past record for the last ¾ years, audited balance sheets records and history to effectively implement a project of this nature could also include the points mentioned below:

1. Long term commitment to the cause of environment through community led initiatives.
2. Qualitative ability to see the differential aspect of the COMDEKS project from other routine funded projects. Contribution to the vision of the Satoyama initiative and that of COMDEKS CPLS, which is enhancing resilience of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes.
3. Clarity and a higher commitment to achieve the objectively verifiable indicators, indicated in the strategy.
4. The final list of projects constituting the overall basket of pilot project situations will be selected following the GEF/UNDP SGP Guidelines. This will serve well the needs of COMDEKS globally considering the examples it hopes to generate for up scaling and replication of future projects across the globe.
5. Allocation within the budget line to share the results of the COMDEKS project with a wider group of policy makers and civil society to perpetuate the Satoyama philosophy.

Whatever the project pursuit may be, it needs to be ensured that the principles of the Satoyama Initiative are respected while the objectives outlined under COMDEKS are met. It is also suggested that all projects include the name of landscapes within the project title and a tag line be carried by all possibly on the lines of “A Satoyama Initiative under the Global COMDEKS Program”. This will help give an identity to the project unique to the effort yet make it a part of the larger global effort planned.

GEF/ UNDP SGP National Steering Committee meetings for COMDEKS:

The COMDEKS project will be governed through the NSC Committee formed under the GEF OP 05 SGP programme. It (COMDEKS) will be a separate agenda in every National Steering Committee meeting happening under the GEF/UNDP SGP in India. The NSC and the projects will be approved in line with the GEF SGP Global Guidelines using the COMDEKS programme templates. The present NSC members have the specific skills and knowledge on Landscape



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Management. At the local level, GB Pant Himalayan Institute, a landscape based national level organization supported by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, will be closely involved with COMDEKS activities. Links will also be established with a range of Government and Non-Government departments and institutions to leverage resources, knowledge and skills.

The SGP National Coordinator has ensured that a qualified person is engaged to support the COMDEKS project at the National Host Institution's (NHI's) Headquarters in Delhi. A project is currently being discussed with a private sector entity to replicate the COMDEKS landscape strategy and use it in another flood plains landscape area in the country nearly 1500 km apart in the state of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The scaling up effort is aimed to build mutual credibility to the usefulness of the community approach.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The selection of grantee involved in preparing the COMDEKS Strategy, as part of a baseline assessment project was done with the participation of UNDP, NSC-Chair, one NSC member and the NC. An initial stakeholder consultation meeting was organized at Dehradun and the data collected as per the "Baseline Assessment Format" received from COMDEKS to form the inputs for the strategy. One-to-one discussions were also held with various Departments to incorporate their view-points, lessons and best practices in similar other funded projects.

After the award of contract to the grantee organization, 5-6 days visits were made in the defined regions and consultations held with 6-7 NGO partners and Government Departments explaining on what is intended under COMDEKS. This, followed by the stakeholders' consultative meeting brought out 5-6 perspective areas where the community should focus on. Regular interactions held with the community on all aspects, i.e. livelihood, biodiversity conservation, eco-tourism, landscape management, fodder management, possible local's skills, knowledge and practices etc. Once the projects will be approved through the process and due diligence there will be all efforts to create the convergence, sharing of experiences. Regular monitoring and documentation will be done in accordance with the monitoring plan that will be incorporated in the individual project document.

Each prospective NGO partner will be guided on the outcome-based approach to be adopted under the project. The projects will follow the COMDEKS and SGP guidelines of submission of quarterly and annual progress reports and each project will be subject to mid-term and terminal evaluations. Six-monthly exposure visits will be organized amongst the stakeholders for experience sharing, learning resulting into corrections at different stages of the project outcomes. A dedicated project person will be engaged to guide and monitor through regular visits and bring in linkages with government departments and other stakeholders.

The following minimum standards have been set for monitoring and evaluation of individual grants

Country Programme Landscape Level Indicators: SEPL Indicators measured during the baseline assessment will be monitored on an annual basis. A final assessment of SEPL indicators will take place at a workshop financed by a grant. This will serve as a final evaluation of the Country Programme Landscape Strategy.

Project Level Indicators: Each project will identify the specific landscape strategy outcome to which it is contributing and will monitor the corresponding indicators (Projects are encouraged to address more than one outcome at the landscape level and track relevant indicators) Progress towards the



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outcome will be updated using the grantees' progress reports. Additionally, the individual project will have an indicator system aligned with GEF SGP's OP5 system of indicators.

Individual grant M&E: The following minimum standards shall be applied for individual grant M&E:

Ex-ante Visits: The project team should undertake ex-ante visits on a risk basis to grant-requesting organizations upon grant approval by the NSC and prior to the signature of the MOA between the Implementing Partner and the grantee.

Field monitoring visits: Every project should be visited at least twice in its lifetime, upon receipt of the first progress report from beneficiary organizations and during the following year. NSC members with relevant expertise in project-related technical areas may join the NC during these visits as appropriate.

Progress reports: Beneficiary organizations should submit half-yearly progress reports to the NC along with a financial report. A forecast of resources needed in the following period should be submitted by the grantee to the NC as a requirement for disbursement of next installment.

Final project evaluation report: Beneficiary organizations should submit a final report summarizing global benefits and other results achieved, outputs produced, and lessons learned. The final report should also include a final financial statement.

Knowledge Management Plan:

Each grantee is expected to contribute to the generation and documentation of best practices and lessons learned. It is therefore required that each project allocates a portion of its budget to produce specific knowledge products that will be summarise the lessons learned and best practices.

It has been a practice with GEF/SGP to regularly develop knowledge management materials e.g. case studies, generate brochures, short photo stories, films and focused success stories of each project. The partners are also encouraged to share their experiences through regular and thematic-area-wise workshops organized nationally and internationally; through the NGO, Government network that has been created. This similar approach will be followed under COMDEKS initiatives.

The existing academic and research-based institutions will be involving the local people in capacity building. Links will also be established with the Land Development Board, Uttarakhand, Wildlife Institute of India, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Bamboo Mission and the State and the Central Forest Departments. The credibility has already been established with the Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE), Dehradun and the Uttarakhand Renewable Energy Department who were actively involved in the development of COMDEKS Strategy. Lessons, best practices and concerns will be addressed through these partnerships. The practice will be more focused in local institution building, skills creation at the local level to manage actions more sustainably.

Based on the draft COMDEKS Strategy, initiatives have already been taken with support from the Steel Authority of India Limited to support landscapes in the flood-plains of Gonda District in Uttar Pradesh. The area is a productive land, impacted by regular floods leading to loss of crop and no regular and systematic measures taken by the State Government to improve the condition. Once the COMDEKS Strategy is approved, a Brochure will be developed on the approach to be followed which will be shared with different partners for replicating in other parts of the country.